

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9048

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

IAEA VIENNA 1213

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 0696

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN PLANS FOR NPT RATIFICATION

REF: A. STATE 009355; B. ROME 17604

SUMMARY. FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF REFTEL A WE HAVE REVIEWED STATUS OF NPT ADHERENCE QUESTION IN GOI WITH RESPONSIBLE FONMIN ACTION OFFICER (NITTI). WE ASSUME NITTI'S RELATIVELY SPECIFIC AND OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENT IS CURRENTLY SHARED BY DA RIN (HIS SUPERIOR FOR NPT AFFAIRS) SINCE NITTI HAD READ DA RIN'S REPORTING CABLES FROM WASHINGTON AND TALKED TO DA RIN. END SUMMARY.

1. TIMING: NITTI EXPRESSED SOME PUZZLEMENT RE POSSIBLE

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SPEEDING UP OF GOI SCHEDULE FOR SUBMISSION OF NPT TO

PARLIAMENT (PARA 3, REF A). HE SAID APPROVAL OF THE SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT IN THE CHAMBER COULD TAKE PLACE ANY DAY AND QTE IS IN THE BAG UNQTE. SINCE MORO REMAINS COMMITTED TO SUBMISSION OF NPT QRT IMMEDIATELY UNQTE AFTER SAFEGUARDS' APPROVAL, IT IS HARDLY POSSIBLE TO ADVANCE THE SCHEDULE SIGNIFICANTLY. HE SPECULATED THAT CHAMBER PLENARY DEBATE ON SAFEGUARD'S MIGHT ELICIT A GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO PRESENT NPT AT A SPECIFIC TIME, WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AS ADVANCING THE SCHEDULE ALONG THE LINES OF DA RIN'S STATEMENT.

2. NITTI'S OFFICE HAS PREPARED THE DOCUMENTATION NECESSARY FOR PRESENTATION OF NPT TO PARLIAMENT; IT IS READY WHEN CALLED FORWARD FOR CONSIDERATION BY HIS QTE POLITICAL SUPERIORS UNQTE. AFTER FONMIN APPROVAL IT REQUIRES CONCURRENCE BY ONE OR TWO OTHER MINISTERS (INCLUDING DEFENSE) AND PERHAPS ONE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS BEFORE GOING TO PARLIAMENT.

3. IF NPT GOES PROMPTLY TO PARLIAMENT, THERE REMAINS A GOOD CHANCE FOR RATIFICATION PRIOR TO REVIEW CONFERENCE, PER NITTI. WITH MORE THAN NINETY PERCENT OF PARLIAMENTARIANS SUPPORTING NPT, JUDGING BY THEIR PARTIES STATED POSITIONS, IT COULD MOVE RAPIDLY. A FILIBUSTER OR INEPT HANDLING BY PARLIAMENTARY MANAGERS COULD IMPEDE ITS PROGRESS, AS COULD ANOTHER GOVERNMENT CRISIS. BUT, AS OF NOW, ONE CANNOT EXPECT THAT SUCH OBSTACLES WILL NECESSARILY CROP UP.

4. RESERVATIONS OR CONDITIONS: NITTI SAID HIS DRAFT PACKAGE WOULD ENTAIL NO CONDITIONS OR RESERVATIONS GOING BEYOND GOI ON-THE-RECORD INTERPRETATIONS AND STATEMENTS MADE IN CONJUNCTION WITH GOI'S SIGNATURE OF NPT IN 1969. IN FACT, CERTAIN INTERPRETATIONS, E.G., IN REGARD TO EURATOM/IAEA ACCORD, ARE NO LONGER GERMANE AND WOULD DROP OUT.

5. NITTI'S CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT THE FURTHER HIS PACKAGE MOVES UP THE POLITICAL LADDER, THE MORE SUBJECT IT BECOMES TO AMENDMENT. HE BELIEVED NO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES WILL OCCUR WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF AN ASSOCIATED STATEMENT PUTTING ITALY'S POLITICO/SECURITY CONCERNNS IN THE CONTEXT OF A MEDITERRANEAN AREA NOT CONSTRAINED BY NPT AS ITALY WOULD BE.

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6. REVIEW CONFERENCE: ITALY IS AWAITING OUTCOME OF FEBRUARY PRECOM MEETING IN GENEVA WHERE ITS PROPOSAL FOR OBSERVER STATUS, ALONG WITH OTHER POSSIBLE VARIANTS (SUCH AS OPENING THE REVIEW CONFERENCE TO ALL UN STATES), ARE UP FOR CONSIDERATION. NITTI SAID MILDLY THAT GOI HOPED IN ANY EVENT, TO RETAIN OPTIONS THAT WOULD PERMIT SOME FORM OF PARTICIPATION AT REVIEW CONFERENCE SHOULD NPT FAIL OF

PARLIAMENTARY PASSAGE IN TIME.

7. NITTI FELT THAT DA RIN'S VIEWS AS EXPRESSED IN WASHINGTON REPRESENTED LITTLE, IF ANY, CHANGE IN GOI'S KNOWN POSITION IN RE NPT. HE REGRETTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO SIGNAL TO US BEFOREHAND THAT DA RIN WOULD PRESENT HIS CASE IN WASHINGTON AS CLEAR-CUT CURRENT GOI POLICY.

8. COMMENT: WE NOTE THAT US OFFICIALS APPEAR TO HAVE LEFT DOOR CRACKED OPEN TO POSSIBLE GOI PARTICIPATION IN SOME WAY AT REVIEW CONFERENCE (PARA 7, REF A). THE EMBASSY WOULD ENDORSE SUCH GOI PRESENCE, AS LESS THAN FULL PARTICIPANT SHOULD, IN THE END, THAT BECOME NECESSARY. IN THE MEANTIME, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT, FOR REASONS CITED REF B, WE SHOULD CONTINUE, PERHAPS IN SUBSEQUENT BILATERALS PRESAGED BY REF A, TO HOLD GOI FEET TO THE FIRE BY CONVEYING TO GOI SERIOUS DOUBT THAT ITALY CAN TAKE A PLACE AT THE TABLE WITHOUT PAYING THE PRICE OF ITS TICKET -- FULL ADHERENCE TO THE NPT. VOLPE

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